

Theology vol 8.
A LITERAL

EXPOSITION

Of Two

Remarkable Prophecies

IN THE

Old Testament,

Relating to

JESUS CHRIST

THE

MESSIAH.

The FIRST,

In the Seventeenth Chapter of *Isaiab*, Verse 14.
Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, &c.

The SECOND,

In the Eighteenth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*,
Verse 15. *The Lord thy God will raise up
unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of
thy Brethren, like unto me, &c.*

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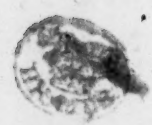
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A Literal Exposition of two Remarkable Prophecies in the Old Testament, &c.

THAT our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ was a Prophet sent from God, and that the Doctrine which he taught was true, are Truths sufficiently proved by the divine Miracles which he wrought, particularly by his Resurrection from the Dead ; but that he was the Messias, prophesied of in the Old Testament, must be made appear by the fulfilling in his own Person the Prophecies relating to the Messias.

Accordingly, we find St. *Matthew* mentions several Prophecies, and shews how they were fulfilled in our blessed Saviour's own Person, or at the time when he was here upon Earth to preach his Gospel. The first Prophecy mentioned by St. *Matthew*, and which is purely relating to the Person of Jesus Christ, is to be met with in the first Chapter of his Gospel ; where he tells us, that *the Birth of Jesus was on this wise ; when as his Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost : then Joseph her Husband being a just Man, and not willing to make her a publick Example, was minded to put her away privily : But while he thought on these things, behold, the Angel*

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of the Lord appeared unto him in a Dream, saying, Joseph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy Wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost, and she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins. (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold a Virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his Name Emmanuel; which being interpreted, is, God with us.)

This Prophecy, cited by St. Matthew, is to be found in the seventh Chapter of *Isaiah*, where we are told that King *Ahaz*, King of *Judah*, when he was distressed by two neighbouring Kings, the King of *Syria* and the King of *Israel*, and in great danger of having his Kingdom and Country utterly destroy'd, a rumour being spread abroad, that the two Kings were in Confederacy against him, was fore afraid; his Heart was moved, and the Heart of the People, as the Trees of the Wood are moved with the Wind. Then the Lord sent *Isaiah* the Prophet unto him, saying, Go forth now to meet *Ahaz* King of *Judah*, thou, and *Shearjashub* thy Son, at the end of the Conduit of the upper Pool, in the high way of the Fuller's Field. Accordingly *Isaiah* went. And *Isaiah* said unto King *Ahaz*, Take heed and be quiet, fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for these two Kings have taken evil Counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against *Judah*, and vex it, and let us make a Breach therein for us, and set a King in the midst of it, even the Son of *Tabeal*: Thus saith the

the Lord God, it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. Which Prophecy in a short time accordingly was accomplished ; for we find in the sixteenth Chapter of the second Book of *Kings*, that *in the seventeenth Year of Pekah the Son of Remaliah, Ahaz the Son of Jotham King of Judah, began to reign, that he walked in the way of the Kings of Israel, yea, and made his Son to pass through the Fire according to the Abominations of the Heathen : Then Rezin King of Syria, and Pekah the Son of Remaliah, King of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war, and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.* Tho' in a short time after we find the two confederate Kings came again against *Judah* and overthrew them with a very great Slaughter, *Ahaz* still continuing in his wicked and idolatrous Practices ; wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the King of *Syria*, and they smote him, and carry'd away a great Multitude of them Captives, and brought them to *Damascus* ; and he was also delivered into the hand of the King of *Israel*, who smote him with a great Slaughter : for *Pekah* the Son of *Remaliah* slew in *Judah* an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant Men ; because they had forsaken the Lord God of their Fathers. And *Zicbri*, a mighty Man of *Ephraim*, slew *Maasejah* the King's Son, and *Azrikam* the Governor of the House, and *Elkanah* that was next to the King. And the Children of *Israel* carried away captive of their Brethren, two hundred thousand Women, Sons and Daughters, and took also away much Spoil from them, and brought the Spoil

to *Samaria*. *Chronicles* the 23 Chapter, 5, 6, 7, and 8 Verses. Yet Verse the fifteenth we find all the Captives were set at liberty, and that they returned again into their own Country ; and in neither of these Incursions do we read that they took any Town, City, or fortify'd Place from *Judah*, except *Elath*, which did belong to *Syria* before ; and in all Probability the taking of *Elath* from *Judah* was the first beginning of the War between *Syria* and *Judah*, which was before God sent the Prophet *Isaiab* to meet *Abaz* : for it is said in the sixteenth Chapter of the second Book of Kings, Verse the sixth, *At that time Rezin King of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath ; and the Syrians came to Elath and dwelt there unto this day.*

The Prophet *Isaiab* after he had foretold the Deliverance of *Judah*, goes on to prophesy concerning *Syria* and *Israel* ; for, saith he, *the Head of Syria is Damascus, and the Head of Damascus is Rezin ; and within threescore and five Years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a People : And the Head of Ephraim is Samaria ; and the Head of Samaria is Remaliah's Son ; if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.* The true Explication of which prophetical words, I take to be this : *Syria* shall not hereafter enlarge her Borders, neither shall *Ephraim*, and within threescore and five Years shall *Ephraim* be broken, that it be not a People : Which was accomplished in the twenty second Year of *Manasseh*, according to Dr. *Prideaux*, who gives a full account of this matter. *Efarbaddon*, saith he, after he had enter'd

enter'd on the fourth Year of his Reign in *Babylon*, and fully settled his Authority there, began to set his Thoughts on the Recovery of what had been lost to the Empire of the *Assyrians* in *Syria* and *Palestine*——He prepared a great Army and marched into those parts, and again added them to the *Assyrian* Empire. And then was accomplished the Prophecy, which was spoken by *Isaiab* in the first Year of *Abaz* against *Samaria*, that within threescore and five Years *Ephraim* should be absolutely broken, so as from thenceforth to be no more a People. For this Year being exactly sixty five Years from the first of *Abaz*, *Efarhad-don*, after he had settled all Affairs in *Syria*, marched into the Land of *Israel*, and there taking captive all those, who were the Remains of the former Captivity (excepting only some few, who escaped his hands, and continued still in the Land) carry'd them into *Babylon* and *Assyria*.——And so the ten Tribes of *Israel*, which had separated from the House of *David*, were brought to a full and utter Destruction, and never after recovered themselves again.

If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be establisbed, saith the Prophet *Isaiab*. These last words [*if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be establisbed*] relate not to the Men of *Judah*, to whom the Prophet was sent by God; but to the Men of *Israel*, of whom then the Prophet was speaking, saying, *within threescore and five Years, shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a People*; which accordingly came to pass. The Men of *Israel* did not listen to the

Prophets, they did not reform their Manners, they did not abstain from Idolatry, and therefore within threescore and five Years, according to the Prophet's Prediction, the whole Nation was carried into Captivity, and never gathered into one Kingdom or People again ; but were joined to *Judah* and to other Nations.

Moreover, the Lord spake again unto *Abaz*, saying, *Ask thee a Sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the Depth, or in the Height above ;* that is, Ask some very extraordinary and convincing Sign. But King *Abaz* vainly imagining, that God bid him ask some very extraordinary Sign to convince him of what the Prophet had not long before told him, namely, that the two Kings having taken evil Counsel against him, saying, *Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a Breach therein for us, and set a King in the midst of it, even the Son of Tabeal : thus saith the Lord God, it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass :* *Abaz* did not obey God's Command ; for truly believing what the Prophet had foretold, he refused to ask a Sign, saying to *Isaiab*, *I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord ;* that is, I will not ask a Sign, for I am fully persuaded of the Truth of what God hath foretold to me by his Prophet.

Yet because it has been a general Opinion among Commentators, that King *Abaz* did not believe the Prophet, tho' he refused to ask a convincing Sign when offered him ; we will here enquire into the Truth of this Opinion of theirs. This Opinion of theirs must arise either

ther from the Character of *Abaz*; *Abaz* was a very wicked King, and guilty of gross Idolatry, they suppose him therefore to be a Person not to be wrought upon either by Promises or Threats: but why they draw such a Conclusion, I don't know; for let them suppose him never so great an Idolater, he might have believed the Prophet, as the *Ninevites* did, when they repented at the Preaching of the Prophet *Jonah*. Certain it is, King *Abaz* was no Infidel, his Crime seems to be the very reverse of Infidelity, he was too credulous, he believed in the Gods of the Nations round about him, as well as in the God of *Israel*; nay, even sometimes he preferred them before the true God of *Israel*: but that he wholly disbelieved God's Prophets, does not appear; we find also that God thought fit to send the Prophet *Isaiab* to him. But if the Character of *Abaz* is not what they ground their Opinion upon, then they must ground their Opinion or Supposition of *Abaz*'s Disbelief, upon the Prophet's reproving of the House of *David*; the Prophet saying, when the King refused to ask a Sign, *Hear ye now, O House of David, is it a small thing for you to weary Men, but will ye weary my God also?* Here indeed the Prophet shews his Resentment; but then we must observe at the same time, there is no mention made or any thing hinted concerning King *Abaz*'s Unbelief of what the Prophet had foretold, or of the Unbelief of the Men of *Judah* and House of *David*: The Prophet re-proves *Abaz* and the House of *David* for refusing to obey God's Command; God com-manded

manded *Abaz* to ask a Sign, he refused to ask; this Refusal of his is recorded in Scripture, but his Disbelief of the Prophet is no where recorded. *Abaz's* Disbelief of the Prophet is but a Supposition, a Supposition without any true Foundation, and seems indeed to be a very absurd Supposition; for first they suppose King *Abaz* not to believe or give any Credit to the Prophet, yet at the same time they suppose the King under great Difficulties and great Distress to refuse a Sign when offered By the Lord to convince him: and tho' as they suppose, *Abaz* did not believe the Prophet, and tho' he from a vile Principle refused a convincing Sign when offered him, yet they suppose God gave him a convincing Sign. Besides, we see that *Abaz*, let his Crime be what it will, the House of *David* also was involved in the same Crime; the whole House of *David* concurr'd with *Abaz* in refusing to ask a Sign: and to suppose the whole House of *David* to be so degenerate and so wicked, as wholly to disregard the God of their Fathers, to despise and contemn his Prophets, and to refuse, if doubting of what the Prophet had foretold, to be confirmed by a Sign, is too harsh a Supposition. On the other hand, if King *Abaz* and the House of *David* thro' mistake refused to ask a Sign when God commanded him to ask, their Crime indeed was great; it is not for mortal Man to argue with himself for what Intent God bids him ask a Sign; obey he must, or sin against his God: But still it is no wilful Sin, it's sinning thro' mistake, a Crime which we, with Charity, may suppose both
both

both *Abaz* and the House of *David* guilty of; yet such a Crime as did require a most severe Reproof: *Hear ye now, O House of David, is it a small thing for you to weary Men, but will ye weary my God also?*

From what hath been already said, and also for other Reasons which follow, we must conclude, that King *Abaz* did believe the Prophet; and first, because the Prophet prophesied good concerning him, and not evil: *Abab* King of *Israel* said to *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*, when they were going to war against the King of *Syria*, *There is one Man, Micajah the Son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil:* when *Abab* at the same time was ready and willing to believe the false Prophets, because of the good which he thought they prophesied concerning him, tho' for so doing he lost his Life.

Another Reason, why I think *Abaz* did believe the Prophet, is, because the King solemnly declares to the Prophet that he did believe him in these Words, *I will not tempt the Lord.* Which Expression of not tempting the Lord, signifies and imports putting a sure Confidence and full Trust in God; for the Phrase of tempting God, signifies and implies, not too much, but too little Confidence; a Diffidence, or Incredulity, as may appear by several Places wherein the Phrase is used in Holy Scripture. Thus the *Israelites* tempting of God in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, is generally doubting of God's Care and Providence, and Power and Wisdom, of which they had so many Arguments

ments and Affurances, and Promises from him; So when King *Abaz* saith, he will not tempt the Lord, the Words signify, that he needed no farther Arguments to ascertain him of the Truth of what was promised; he was fully convinced it would come to pass. *Abaz* did, indeed, make use of Human Means, he did send to the King of *Affyria* for Aid and Assistance; which thing he might do, and still rely upon God's Promises, and believe he should have Success against his Enemies, and that their wicked Counsels should not stand nor take effect. The Prophet *Isaiab*, it is true, was commanded by God to bid *Abaz* take heed and be quiet, not to fear nor be faint-hearted, for the Tails of these smoaking Firebrands, for the fierce Anger of *Rezin* with *Syria*, and the Son of *Remaliah*; but here the Prophet does not command the King not to make use of Human Means, not to use his best Endeavours to oppose the Enemy; but bids him be easy in his mind and quiet, not to fear, but be courageous; which seems to imply the making use of his utmost Skill and strongest Endeavours to oppose the two Kings and all other his Enemies.

Taking it therefore for granted, that King *Abaz* did believe the Prophet, our next Inquiry must be, why did God give him a Sign? And, what was the Sign the Lord did give? *Isaiab* tells *Abaz* upon his refusing to ask a Sign, that the Lord himself will give him a Sign: *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel; Butter and Honey shall he eat, that he may know to re-*
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use the evil and choose the good ; for before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the Land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her Kings. Here we have the Sign, and may perceive upon what account the Sign was given. The Sign given to *Abaz* is this : *The Land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her Kings ; that is, The Land of Syria and Israel shall be deprived of both her Kings ; both the King of Syria and the King of Israel shall be destroyed, shall both be killed, shall both be cut off.* That this is the true Sense of this Passage, may be gathered from other Places of Scripture where the same Expression is made use of.

The Prophet *Zephaniah* foretelling God's severe Judgments upon four Cities belonging to the *Philistines*, saith thus : *Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a Desolation : they shall drive out Ashdod at the Noon-day, and Ekron shall be rooted up.* *Gaza* shall be forsaken, not robbed, spoiled or destroyed according to the *Septuagint* Version, but forsaken according to the *Hebrew* Text : That is, *The Inhabitants of Gaza shall be cut off, or carried into perpetual Captivity.* The Cities of *Aroer*, saith *Isaiah* in the seventeenth Chapter and second Verse, shall be forsaken, *they shall be for Flocks which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.* Here the Cities of *Aroer*, Cities in *Syria*, are represented as forsaken Places, Places inhabited only by wild Beasts ; but then it must be observed, that the Judgment here denounced is not really against the Cities of *Aroer*, but against the Inhabitants of those Cities ; for according

cording to the prophetic Stile, when any Town, City, Palace or Land is said to be forsaken ; the true meaning is, the Inhabitants of that Town, City, Palace or Land shall be destroyed, some heavy Judgment shall fall upon them : So *Munster, quando dicitur Damascum ablatam, hoc non est intelligendum de Urbe, quæ adhuc stat, sed de hominibus tunc in eâ habitantibus.* So when *Isaiab* saith, *The Land shall be forsaken of both her Kings* ; the Prophet means some heavy remarkable Judgment shall befall the two Kings, the King of *Syria* and the King of *Israel*. But for what Intent and Purpose was this Sign given to *Ahaz* and the House of *David* ? No doubt to convince them, that some time or other a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and that the Son born of a Virgin should be God with us, God in the Flesh dwelling among us ; for it is said, You, O Virgin, shall call his Name, or his Name shall be called, or they shall call his Name, *Immanuel*, all which Expressions according to the *Hebrew Idiom*, signify he shall be *Immanuel*, that is, God with us. Mr. *White* says in his Preface to his Commentary on *Isaiab*, the hardiest Jew cannot deny, that *Nalma* may signify a Virgin ; and I will oblige, saith he, the best Critic of the Circumcision to confess, that to be called is the same in their Language, as to be. *Isaiab* himself, in the ninth Chapter and the sixth Verse, speaking of the Child *Immanuel*, saith, *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder, and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father,*

ther, the Prince of Peace. It cannot be supposed he was to be called by all these Names ; but he was to be Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. So *Isaiab*, the fifty sixth Chapter and seventh Verse, *For my House shall be called an House of Prayer for all People :* that is, my House shall be an House of Prayer for all People. *Jeremiah*, the twenty third Chapter and sixth Verse, *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely : and this is his Name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness :* that is, he shall be the Lord our Righteousness. So here where *Isaiab* saith, *You, O Virgin, shall call his Name God with us,* must be understood, he shall be God with us, God in the Flesh dwelling among us, he shall be God and Man.

Then the Prophet goes on and tells us, that the Child should eat Butter and Honey, that is, should eat the same Food as other Children did eat, till by increasing in Wisdom he should be able to refuse the evil and choose the good ; but what Man is there or ever was, except *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, that was thoroughly and constantly able to refuse the evil and choose the good ? But if the Sign given to *Abaz* was to convince him and the House of *David*, and the Men of *Judah*, that in future times a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son ; why did not the Prophet say, the two Kings should be destroyed before the Virgin should conceive and bear a Son ? Whereas he saith before, the Child should know to refuse the evil and choose the good ; which would incline one rather to think,

think, that the destruction of the two Kings was to happen between the Birth of the Child, and the Time of the Child's being able to refuse the evil and choose the good?

To which I answer, different Ages and different Nations have different ways of expressing themselves; and if it does appear, that the *Jews* in *Isaiab's* time did understand this Prophecy of a Child that was to be born after the destruction of the two Kings; and after the destruction of the two Kings, did expect daily to see the Child that was to be born of a Virgin, the Difficulty vanishes; for the *Jews* of that time must be supposed best to understand their own Language; their own Prophet, and their own Way of speaking. And that the *Jews* did in *Isaiab's* time expect to see God in the Flesh after the destruction of the two Kings, and that their expectation arose from this Prophecy, I shall prove. But in the first place, let us examine a little into the common acceptance of this passage in *Isaiab*: It is commonly supposed, that King *Abaz* did not believe the Prophet, and therefore God gave a Sign to convince him; the Sign given, is the Miracle of a male Child, born of nobody knows whom; but we will suppose, they did know at that time the Woman who was to conceive and bear a male Child; yet the Miracle of a male Child does not carry Conviction along with it. *Abaz* would still remain an Unbeliever, a young married Woman is more likely to conceive than not, and it is an equal Chance, she conceives and bears a Son: but we will suppose the Birth of a male Child to be a sufficient Sign to *Abaz*, be-
cause

cause it was what with certainty could not be known, but by a Prophet; yet there is no Comfort afforded to *Abaz* by this sufficient Sign; poor *Abaz* must remain in the same disconsolate Condition he was in before the Sign was given. The Prophet tells him a male Child shall be born, and before the male Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, his two Enemy-Kings should be destroyed, that is, in seven Years; for we can't suppose the male Child should be able in less time, to refuse the evil and choose the good: but what comfort could this afford *Abaz* in his present Distress? The two Kings might destroy *Abaz*, and all the House of *David*, and all the Men of *Judah*, in half that time, tho' they themselves were destroyed afterwards.

From what hath been said, it plainly appears here was no Sign given to *Abaz* to comfort him in his Distress; but the Sign given the sad Catastrophe or Destruction of the two Kings, was to convince *Abaz*, and the House of *David*, and the Men of *Judah*, that in future times a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and that that Son should be God with us, that he should eat the same Food that other Children did eat, till he should be able to refuse the evil and choose the good; for before all these things relating to the Child should come to pass; that is, before a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and before this Son should know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the Land should be forsaken of both her Kings; and tho' it is not said directly before the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, so neither is it said to the contrary.

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But then it ought not to pass without Observation, that if the Child to be born of a Virgin was to be, as is declared in the Prophecy, God with us, or *Immanuel*, the Child must be God Incarnate, God in the Flesh dwelling among us. This extraordinary and surprising Prophecy then of a *Messiah*, of a God Incarnate, of an *Immanuel*, could not but very much affect those *Jews*, those faithful in *Judah*, to whom it was first deliver'd: they also must be in daily expectation of seeing the *Messiah*, the God Incarnate, the coming of whom into the World the Prophet *Isaiab* had predicted; they must daily expect his coming after the two Kings, the King of *Syria* and the King of *Israel*, were destroyed; for it is not now declared by the Prophet when the *Messiah* should appear in the World, it is only said by *Isaiab* that a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and that that Son shall be God with us; and before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the Land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her Kings. The Land was to be forsaken of both her Kings, after which destruction of the two Kings, some time or other the *Messiah* was to appear in the World; all which amounts to no more than this, that God and Man shall be born of a Virgin, and before the Child born of a Virgin shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, your two Enemy-Kings shall be destroyed. Before the destruction therefore of the two Kings they were not to expect the *Messiah*, the God Incarnate, the Child to be born of a Virgin; but as soon as the two Kings were destroyed, they must be
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be in daily expectation of the coming of the *Messiah*, tho' he might not appear in the World from any thing said in the Prophecy, a long time after ; it being now the Will of God that they should be in daily expectation of his coming ; and in this daily expectation of his coming, did they continue, earnestly wishing and desiring to see him, till God was pleased by the Prophet *Daniel* to foretel the time of his coming, then this daily expectation ceased, ceased till the appointed time drew near, it then revived again. So that from the end of the *Babylonish* Captivity, the time of *Daniel's* Prophecy, till towards the time of the Birth of *Jesus Christ* ; we hear but little of their expectation of the *Messiah* : they did indeed expect him, but not till the appointed time. But from the destruction of the two Kings, we may meet with the daily expectation the Faithful were then in, of the coming of the *Messiah* : for it is but reasonable to believe, that the Prophet *Isaiah* himself understood the Prophecy ; and if he did understand it, no doubt, he would discover the true meaning and intent of it to all the Faithful in the Land of *Judah* ; especially to good King *Hezekiah*, with whom the Prophet *Isaiah* was very conversant. But indeed they could not well miss of the true meaning and intent of it : The Words of the Prophecy are very plain and obvious, tho' very surprising, *A Virgin was to conceive and bear a Son, and this same Son born of a Virgin was to be God with us*. They could not possibly believe that a young Woman conceiving and bearing a Son was a convincing Sign to *Abaz*, or could afford him

any comfort in his Distress ; they knew very well when God declared a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son, a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and not a young married Woman ; they knew very well, when God declared the Son born of a Virgin should be God with us, that he was to be God Incarnate, God in the Flesh dwelling among us.

But now I shall proceed to shew, that the faithful in *Judab* in the Days of the Prophet *Isaiab* did certainly understand this Prophecy in the very same sense St. *Matthew* afterwards understood it ; namely, *That a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and that that Son so conceived and born of a Virgin should be God with us, God in the Flesh dwelling among us.*

Good King *Hezekiab*, when the Prophet *Isaiab* was sent unto him from God to bid him set his House in order, for he should die and not live, tells us what his Thoughts were when he expected every moment to die : his first and chiefest Concern, he saith, was, that he should not live to see the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the Living.

And what can the true meaning of this Concern be ? but that King *Hezekiab* was in daily expectation of seeing God in the Flesh, according to the foresaid Prediction of *Isaiab* ; for no otherwise could he truly see the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the Living.

The great *Grotius* indeed tells us, that *Hezekiab's* great Concern at this time was, that if he died, as he expected he should, he then should not see the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord that was at *Jerusalem* ;
but

but *Hezekiah*, it is certain, had often before his Illness seen the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and tho' he might be concerned that he should see the Temple no more, yet that Concern could not be very great: besides, he speaks of something which he had not yet seen, but was in daily expectation and hopes of seeing; for he does not say, that he was concerned that he should not see the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the Living any more, as he does when he shews his Concern that he should not see Man with the Inhabitants of the World; for then he saith, I shall behold Man no more with the Inhabitants of the World: but his great Concern was, that if he then died he should fail of seeing what he daily expected, and earnestly wished to see, namely, the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the Living. Besides, seeing the Temple of the Lord, is not seeing the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the Living. But I shall not here contend any farther in this matter with the great *Grotius*; but leave it to the Judgment, both of the partial and impartial Reader to determine: and proceed to observe, that from what hath been already said, it plainly, very plainly appears, that from the end of the Reign of King *Abaz* the *Jews* did expect to see in this World the *Messiah*, God Incarnate, God and Man to be born of a Virgin, God dwelling among us.

And now I think it may not be amiss to go on to shew, that the *Israelites*, even from the Days of *Moses*, did expect another Prophet like unto *Moses* should appear in the World, a Prophet with as large a Commission granted

by God, as *Moses* had, and who should give as good Proof of his Divine Mission as *Moses* did. *Moses* himself declares to the People of *Israel*, that God would raise them up a Prophet, like unto him, of their Brethren; and unto that Prophet, like unto me, saith he, ye shall hearken.

This Prophecy of *Moses* hath already been excellently well defended, and proved to be a literal Prophecy of the *Messiah*, literally fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*, and in him only, by several late Learned Writers, who have proved, that *Moses* did not mean by a Prophet, a Succession of Prophets, nor any single Prophet that was not a Prophet like unto *Moses*; a Prophet like unto *Moses*, no doubt, must mean such a Prophet as *Moses* was, a Prophet commissioned by God to bring a new Dispensation to the People, and who should work as great Miracles as *Moses* did.

But the great *Grotius* tells us, that when *Moses* says, *Like unto me*, he does not speak of his, that is, *Moses's* legislative, but his prophetick Office; and that the Word *like*, denotes a certain Agreement in Name and Authority, and not a perfect Equality.

To which I answer, that Law-giving and Prophefying are indeed two very different and distinct Offices and Employments; a Law-giver need not be a Prophet, neither need a Prophet be a Law-giver; if we mean by Law-giver, such a Law-giver as a King is to his People: but in *Moses's* Case the critical Distinction of the great *Grotius* will not hold good; for *Moses* was no such Law-giver to
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the *Jews*, as a King is to his People ; strictly speaking, *Moses* was no Law-giver at all to the *Jews*, God was their Law-giver. *Moses* was the Prophet employed and authorized by God to bring and declare God's Law to the People of *Israel*, empowered by God to prove his Divine Mission by Signs and Wonders ; yet *Moses* executed no other Office but the prophetic, in bringing the Law from God, and declaring it to the People. Whoever comes from God, and declares God's Will to the People, he is a Prophet according to the true *Hebrew* sense of the word *Prophet* ; whether he come from God to bring a new Law from God to the People, or whether he come commissioned by God to perfect and compleat an old Law, or to foretel future Events, or to bring a new Dispensation from God ; he is a Prophet, he strictly speaking is no Law-giver. Such a Prophet, such a Law-giver therefore as *Moses* was, the People of *Israel* were to expect, a Prophet commissioned by God to declare God's Law to the People, as *Moses* was commissioned to do. In short, the Prophet foretold by *Moses* was to be a Prophet like unto *Moses*, was to have as large a Commission from God as *Moses* had, was to bring a new Law from God as *Moses* did ; he was to be such a Prophet as *Moses* was, in Name, and also in Authority like unto *Moses*.

The People are therefore commanded by God to hearken unto him and to obey him : for, saith God, he shall speak unto the People all that I shall command him, and whosoever shall not hearken unto my Words, which he,

the Prophet like unto *Moses*, shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him.

From the time of *Moses* till *Jesus Christ* came into the World, it is certain, no Prophet like unto *Moses* did appear ; no new Revelation ; no new Dispensation was sent from God to the People by any other Prophet but *Jesus Christ* ; he was the Prophet therefore foretold by *Moses*, and sent by God to speak to the People, and declare to them the whole Will of God, according to all that the People desired of the Lord their God in *Horeb* in the day of the Assembly ; saying, *Let us not bear again the Voice of the Lord our God, neither let us see this great Fire any more, that we die not.*

What God thought fit at this time to declare to the Children of *Israel* by *Moses* concerning him who was afterwards called the *Messiah* ; was, that God would send them a Prophet like unto *Moses*, a Prophet authorized by God to publish God's Law to the People. In process of time, indeed God was pleased to declare to the People of *Israel* by the Prophet *Isaiab*, *That a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and that that Son should be God with us.* Afterwards God made known to the People by the Prophet *Daniel* the appointed time when the *Messiah* the Prince should appear in the World ; but at this time God only declares to the People, that he would send them a Prophet like unto *Moses*, of their Brethren ; a Prophet who should bring a new Revelation from God, and who should work divine, great and wonderful Miracles ; the
coming

coming of which Prophet into the World, the *Israelites* were in constant expectation of, as appears by their frequent relapsing into Idolatry.

We find in sacred History, that the Children of *Israel* were very prone to Idolatry; that is, hearkening to false Prophets, they frequently relapsed into Idolatry, forsaking the Law of *Moses*: and thus they did, and continued to do till the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity; but after the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity, we do not find they were ever guilty of that heinous Crime.

Now what should occasion this proneness in them to Idolatry before the *Babylonish* Captivity? They were Men, as it is but reasonable to suppose, of as good common Sense and natural Capacities, as those who lived after the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity, or as we ourselves are, who now so much admire and wonder at their then proneness to Idolatry; but their frequent relapsing into Idolatry, no doubt, proceeded from their giving credit to false Prophets.

A false Prophet, when he designed to lead the People into Idolatry, pretended to be a Prophet equally as great as *Moses* was, who was commissioned by God to bring from God a Law to the People: this must be his Pretence, otherwise he could not have led the People into Idolatry; Idolatry being a forsaking of the Law of *Moses*, both as to the Object and Mode of Worship.

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The Children of *Israel* must therefore believe that the ceremonial Law of *Moses* was to be changed, when the Prophet like unto *Moses* appeared in the World ; otherwise they could not so easily have been led into Idolatry by false Prophets, working upon their Credulity by using Divination, or by being Charmers, or Consulters with familiar Spirits, or Wizards, or Necromancers, by Sleights and cunning Tricks, persuading the People that they were sent from God. All such therefore, the Lord commands them by *Moses* not to hearken to, neither to let any such be found among them. God, out of tender Compassion to his chosen People, forewarns them not to hearken to false Prophets, Charmers, Wizards or Necromancers, nor to let them live, for they were an Abomination unto the Lord : All which the Lord had commanded before, and forewarned them of ; but now God being to declare to the People, that a Prophet like unto *Moses* was to appear in the World, seeking after whom they might be led into Idolatry, thought fit, before he foretold the coming into the World of a Prophet like unto *Moses*, to caution them once more to take care not to be deceived by false Prophets ; saying unto them by *Moses*, in the 18th Chap. of *Deut.* *When thou art come into the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the Abomination of those Nations ; there shall not be found among you any one that maketh his Son or his Daughter to pass through the Fire, or that useth Divination, or an Observer of Times,*
or

or an Inchanter, or a Witch, or a Charmer, or a Consulter with familiar Spirits, or a Wizard, or a Necromancer ; for all that do these things are an Abomination unto the Lord ; and because of these Abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God ; for these Nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto Observers of Times, and unto Diviners ; but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken, according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, let me not hear again the Voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great Fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken, I will raise them up a Prophet, from among their Brethren, like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my Words, which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him ; but the Prophet which shall presume to speak a Word in my Name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or shall speak in the Name of other Gods, even that Prophet shall die.

God promises here that he would raise them up a Prophet, who should bring them a new Law from God, he should be like unto *Moses* ; but at the same time, to prevent their running
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into Idolatry, by hearkening to false Prophets pretending to bring a new Law from God, he commands and requires it of them, that *there should not be found among them any one that maketh his Son or his Daughter pass through the Fire, or that useth Divination, or an Observer of Times, or an Inchanter, &c.* But saith God, *the Prophet, that is, the false Prophet, which shall presume to speak a Word in my Name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the Name of other Gods, even that Prophet shall suffer Death.* Thus we see the true Connection of this so much controverted Passage in *Deuteronomy*.

The false Prophet, the Charmer, the Necromancer was to be put to death : a Prophet like unto *Moses* was to appear in the World, and the People commanded to hearken unto him ; for he was to bring a new Law from God : the Nature of which new Law, new Dispensation, new Covenant, was afterwards foretold and described by the Prophet *Jeremiah* : *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and the House of Judah : not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the day that I took them out of the Land of Egypt. But this shall be my Covenant, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. I will forgive their Iniquity, and will remember their Sin no more.*

But

But if thou say in thy Heart, how shall we know the Word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a Prophet speaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him: That is, when a Prophet pretends to come from God, tho' by using Divination, or by being an Observer of Times, or a Necromancer, he may perform some surprizing things, yet before you believe and give full credit to him, let him foretell something which in a short time will come to pass, and what Man, by his natural Sagacity, could not have foreseen. Such a thing, for instance, as Jesus Christ foretold to blind Bartimeus, the Son of Timeus, who sat begging by the Highway-side; Jesus said unto him, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind Man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy Faith hath made thee whole: and immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. But if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing that the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, fear not to put that Prophet to death.

Before I finish this Discourse, I would take notice of what I had formerly observed, That the Jews, after the Babylonish Captivity, were never guilty of the Sin of Idolatry. Before

fore the *Babylonish* Captivity, their frequent relapsing into Idolatry is already accounted for ; they were then in constant Expectation of a Prophet's coming into the World, a Prophet like unto *Moses* ; and whilst they were in this constant Expectation of a Prophet like unto *Moses*, they were often seduced and led into Idolatry by false Prophets : but after the *Babylonish* Captivity, the case was quite altered with them ; the Prophet *Daniel* then foretold the Time when the Messiah should appear in the World. After which Prediction of the Prophet *Daniel*, a Prophet held in great esteem by the *Jews*, there was no room, no opportunity for false Prophets to deceive the People, and lead them into Idolatry. The Devil therefore not being now able to seduce the People, and lead them into Idolatry, contrives their Ruine, their utter Ruine, more fatally another way ; he now suggests to them that the Messiah the Prince, the time of whose coming into the World *Daniel* had predicted, was to be a temporal Prince, was to be a victorious King, was to command their Armies, was to conquer and subdue all their Enemies round about. This fatal Suggestion of the Devil wrought so powerfully upon their Ambition and Revenge, that when the true Messiah did appear, they knew him not, nor acknowledged his Authority ; but denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a Murderer to be granted unto them, and killed the Prince of Life : and in the same fatal Mistake have the *Jews* continued ever since, even to this very day ; they
still

still expect a temporal Prince, a temporal and victorious Messiah; one who shall vanquish and subdue all their Enemies, head their Armies, and conquer all the Nations upon Earth. But I earnestly desire them for their own sakes, in so important a Matter, a Matter on which depends their eternal Salvation or Damnation, that they would search the Scriptures, and see if these things are so; that they would reject all vain Traditions, and stick close to the pure Word of God: that they would hearken to him who was a Prophet like unto *Moses*, and who brought a new Dispensation from God; and who himself declared, and was to declare, of what Nature his Kingdom should be.

Also this surprizing Conduct of the *Jews*, who before the *Babylonish* Captivity were constantly relapsing into Idolatry and forsaking *Moses's* Law, who after the Captivity are never found guilty of the same Sin, but on the contrary always adhering zealously to the Law of *Moses*; even those *Jews*, who were so well pleased with the Place of their Captivity, that they refused to return into their own Country, could never be wrought upon by false Prophets to forsake the God of *Israel*: This remarkable Behaviour of the *Jews*, I say, is a strong Proof of the Truth, Genuineness, Authenticity and Antiquity of the Book of *Daniel*; for what other adequate Reason can be assigned for this remarkable Behaviour of the *Jews*, but that *Daniel* having foretold the Time of the coming of the Messiah, false
 3 Prophets

Prophets could no longer deceive the People, and lead them into Idolatry? But the Guineness of the Book of *Daniel* hath lately been so well defended by a Learned Bishop of our Church, that I need say no more.

F I N I S.

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